

## Faith &amp; Inspiration

## Child Care



By Vincent V.  
Marshburn -

An argument can be made that the manner in which a society treats its children reveals much about the true values of its people. For instance, are children considered a cherished and valued gift from our Creator (Psalm 127:3), or are they viewed as a necessary nuisance? Does a society uphold its duty to protect and nurture its children, or are children perceived as bothersome, burdensome, or in the extreme, even disposable or expendable?

The very notion of reproduction and child-rearing as a naturally occurring or desirable act of human development in sustaining a society has, to varying degrees, been called into question over time. Among certain populations or segments of a population, it has been observed that the objective of childbearing and parenting is sometimes regarded with less prioritization than other motivations, such as personal achievement or

career advancement. To be sure, while God's general commission to humanity from the beginning was to "be fruitful and multiply," this is not to say that every human being is necessarily obligated to directly participate in the perpetuation of the species. Indeed, as many of us are fully aware, and as some would perhaps be able to personally attest, fertility is not a guarantee. As with all aspects of our life, God's will ultimately supersedes any ambition, yearning, or even biology.

From Scripture we can deduce that children do not merely represent the mechanism by which we are able to propagate. Producing and raising offspring allows us to observe and experience fundamental aspects of our relationship with the heavenly Father and to discern the most effective attitude by which we can approach him.

As recorded in the gospels, Jesus insisted that children should be allowed to interact with him without impediment, perhaps contravening some of the cultural assumptions and expectations of his day (Matthew 19:13-15, Mark 10:13-16, Luke 18:15-17). Jesus made it a point to emphasize that childlike humility is the key to entering the kingdom of heaven, and

that accepting and caring for children is demonstrative of accepting Jesus himself (Matthew 18:1-6).

While we are thus exhorted to become "like children" with regard to exercising faith and respecting others, this is not to say we are called to mindless and irrational compliance as if subject to some kind of cult that would attempt to suppress our free will and individuality. While ideal childlike qualities might include innocence, trust, obedience, and dependence, it is also true that children can exhibit other positive or desirable qualities such as contentment, awe, simplicity, and inquisitiveness.

In a very real sense, children are some of the most vulnerable members of our society. The fact of this vulnerability is what perhaps leads to the reality that a child is often readily prone to trust or hope. This state of reliance may also explain a child's tendency towards extending forgiveness and demonstrating compassion. As adults, our response to these sensitivities can manifest our own realization of shortcomings and, hopefully, motivate us to emulate them.

In an episode of the television series "Star Trek: Voyager," the crew of the titular starship

investigate a planet which appears to contain deposits of a mineral which would prove extremely useful in their efforts to maintain the ship's engines. While attempting to land on the surface in a shuttle craft, chief security officer Tuvok, a Vulcan, survives a crash which kills a fellow crew member.

Tuvok then encounters a group of children of the Drayans species, presumably indigenous to this region of space. The children, named Tressa, Corin, and Elani, are quite disoriented and anxious, having themselves survived a similar incident. The atmosphere of this particular planet is apparently somewhat hazardous and requires highly skilled maneuvering. Tuvok does his best to comfort and safeguard the children, who claim they are in danger of being killed by some mysterious creature called a "Morrok" that emerges from a nearby cave.

While Tuvok does have children of his own

back in the "Alpha" quadrant of the galaxy, he is not fully accustomed to dealing with children of other species. In contending with their restlessness, curiosity, meddling with potentially dangerous equipment, and bouts of anxiety — behaviors typical of young children — Tuvok discovers that they do indeed possess a genuine fear of this place. His paternal instincts are engaged, and when it appears that other Drayans have landed on the planet in search of them, Tuvok attempts to allay the children's fears and deduce the source of their dread.

**TUVOK:** Why do you believe they've come to kill you?

**TRESSA:** We're supposed to die here. That's what this place is for.

**CORIN:** They bring children here for the final ritual. Then the Morrok takes them away.

**ELANI:** No one ever comes back.

**TUVOK:** It is illogical for a society to kill its own children.

**TRESSA:** The scrolls say we should be happy. That when we die the energy inside us is set free.

**CORIN:** Is it true? Is that what really happens?

**TUVOK:** Vulcans believe that a person's katra, what some might call a soul, continues to exist after the body dies.

**ELANI:** Do you believe that?

**TUVOK:** When I was younger, I accepted it without question. In recent years I have experienced doubts. I do believe there is more in each of us than science has yet explained.

**TRESSA:** I know we should have more faith. It's wrong to be afraid of death.

**TUVOK:** There is

nothing wrong in choosing to live.

**ELANI:** Will you help us?

Soon, only Tressa remains as the other children seem to disappear in the night. As it turns out, Drayans appear to age "in reverse," and these "children" are actually Drayans who have reached the end of their life cycle. It is the custom of their people to escort to this planet those who are ready to release their energy from their corporeal form to join with the energy of others who have gone before. Tuvok accepts the honor of accompanying Tressa during her time of transition.

In the Bible, the recurring references to children speak to our intended relationship with our heavenly Father. The fact that Jesus is identified as the Son of God, as well as Son of Man, should help us begin to understand this relationship and how we should model our own role after Jesus himself. In the kingdom of heaven, we are not merely subjects or servants. As believers, we enjoy the privilege of being God's children (John 1:12 -13, Galatians 3:26, 1 John 3:1).

From what we can glean from Scripture, God is concerned with not only our ability to embrace the innocent and meek qualities of children, but also with our attitude regarding responsibility, compassion, and kindness towards children. As individuals and as a society, it behooves us to consider the welfare of children with the utmost care and concern.

## Life Convention Expo at Mater Bay Academy

By David Volz -

The Town of Cutler Bay recently held its third annual Life Convention Expo at Mater Bay Academy.

The event brought together people who wanted to learn and improve their quality of life. It was designed for residents aged 60 and older, and included community resources to support the lives of older residents.

Those who came participated in workshops on preventing scams, navigating technology, understanding insurance information, and receiving retirement tips and guidance. The event also featured workout

sessions, including Zumba, along with raffles, breakfast, and lunch, which made for a well-rounded and energizing day, according to a statement from the town.

Mayor Tim Meerott said, "The Life Convention Expo has become a cornerstone of our community's efforts to support our senior residents. Seeing so many service providers, facilitators, and our very engaged seniors come together to learn and enjoy the day is truly heartwarming. We are committed to continuing this tradition and ensuring it grows bigger and better every year."

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